

Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978



February 2018

IS IT GOD... OR A COINCIDENCE???

I was chatting with a young father after worship service yesterday. "John," he began enthusiastically, "my wife called me in distress. She was on an errand with the children and the van window would not raise back up to the closed position. I suggested she drive slowly home and then tape some plastic over the open space, until I could have it repaired."

"When I got home later, I asked about the situation. 'Oh,' she explained, 'after talking with you, I decided to pray out loud with the children, asking the Lord to please help. And the window went back up!' The children were quite excited about the answered prayer!"

Some people would say, "Wow!" or "What a coincidence!" or "Amazing!" or "Can you believe that!" But some others exclaim, "Thank You, Lord!"

Is it really God's involvement at such times?

A similar story from Sunday, a week ago, when another friend told me his "God story." He had received an instruction to make a delivery to a house that had run out of its heating-oil fuel. "Oh no," he thought... "that has happened before and I know that furnace is a hard one to get re-ignited after running out of fuel." Upon arriving, he filled the tank, went to the basement and... guess what? The furnace started immediately and easily!

So, again... God at work??? Or a pleasant coincidence?

Does God actually involve Himself in the minutia of life? Should we ask the Lord to help us with the small stuff? If we're running late, should we dare to ask the Lord for a parking spot at the grocery store?

My perspective? When "small good things" happen, whether I prayed specifically or not, it seems always appropriate to say, "Thank YOU, Lord" or "Thank You, Jesus" instead of the many variations of "Nice, isn't that amazing!" What if it was just a coincidence? Do we think the Lord will mind us thanking Him? It seems Father will always enjoy our expressions of appreciation.

After all, Scripture says "EVERY good gift is from above, coming down from the Father..." (James 1:17)

I can tell you that I do talk to the Lord about small stuff... yes, a parking spot, upcoming blood work, bills to be paid, etc., etc... And, I'm learning to thank Him for many daily small blessings.

The greater challenge for me is to express gratitude when a situation is NOT going the way I'm requesting. When it seems to be a BAD situation. At such times, I purpose to see God's same GOODNESS toward me. He is able to make EVERY situation work out for my good... and that GOOD is that I am becoming more and more conformed into the image of His son Jesus Christ! (Romans 8:28-29) And, I DO WANT to be like HIM! So it seems I can THANK HIM whether things seem to go my way or not!

God is GOOD... ALL THE TIME!

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)





Getting to Know You

Written by Sharon Charles

Question: I feel like the subjects we talk about at our house are mostly trite. The children must be coaxed to say much about their day and often give only one-word answers to questions. Even the conversation between my spouse and me is superficial... focused on tomorrow's schedule or chore list. Any suggestions for getting better at talking with each other?

Response: Some people are born chatterboxes. Others are naturally more quiet and reserved. However, generating meaningful conversation is a valuable skill for everyone to master. It will enrich family ties, strengthen friendships, and improve work relationships. And it will definitely open doors of opportunity to bless others. As Scripture says, "A word of encouragement does wonders!" Jesus set a great example in asking questions that delved beyond surface information and invited spiritually-enriching talk.

Try some of the following questions, perhaps one a day for the next month, to promote deeper dialogue with your family and friends.

1. What made you smile today?
2. What is something you did in the past that helped you learn a valuable lesson?
3. What do you appreciate about your friends?
4. If you wrote an autobiography, what would the title be?
5. Which of your household jobs do you find most enjoyable? Least enjoyable?
6. What Bible story is your favorite? Why?
7. Who do you love to be around? Why do you like to be with them?
8. If Jesus sat down beside you, what do you think He would want to discuss with you?
9. What do you enjoy thinking about?
10. What skill have you used to help others? How did it help them?
11. Where is your favorite place to relax? Why do you find it so relaxing?
12. How do you like to start your day?
13. How do you most enjoy ending your day?
14. What is your favorite church song, praise chorus or hymn? What makes it so meaningful?
15. If you could choose to study only one subject in school, what would it be?
16. What do you look forward to doing or seeing in heaven?
17. If you were given five hundred-dollar bills today, what would you do with them?
18. What improvement in yourself would you love to make?
19. What improvement in your family would you love to make?
20. If you could see God with your eyes, what do you think He would look like?
21. What makes you afraid? What do you do when you feel that fear?
22. If you could paint an amazing picture, what would you portray?
23. What new type of vehicle would you wish to invent?
24. How do you think this coming year will be better than the last year?
25. Why do you think love is important?
26. What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?
27. Who is someone who has taught you a lot? What is an important thing you learned from them?
28. If you could talk with your great, great, great grandparents, what would you ask them?
29. What is something about yourself that you would never want to change?
30. What is something you enjoy about each season of the year?
31. Why do you think God placed you in this family?

Open Arms Childbirth Class

April 5-May 3, 2018
Five Consecutive Thursdays at 7:00pm

Taught by an experienced childbirth educator, this class covers the same information offered in a hospital course, but includes a distinctively Christian perspective. You will meet and connect with other expectant couples and gain many practical helps as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course. Please register by contacting the ALM office (see contact information below).



Contact Information

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